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Author

Maccannell, Juliet

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Isn't there in architecture itself a kind of actualization of pain? The Baroque tried to make architecture itself aim at pleasure, to give it a form of liberation, which, in effect, made it blaze up so as to constitute a paradox in the history of masonry and of building. And that goal of pleasure gave us forms which, in a metaphorical language that in itself takes us a long way, we call 'tortured.'

Lacan (1992: 60-61)

The Capitalist 'Unconscious'?

Late capitalism presents itself to our imagination as a comprehensive global system encircling the entire world, defined primarily by its accumulated wealth²: a world of plenty in a post-scarcity economy of goods. However, as Lacan wonders, has any economist thought to ask: "What is 'wealth'?"³ In *The Future of an Illusion* (1927: 6), Freud had defined 'wealth' as the 'amount of instinctual satisfaction' obtainable by a society's means. Civilization – the human collective symbolized first by cities – starts when we 'extract wealth from nature' through a collaborative labor requiring individuals to sacrifice their instinctual satisfactions to the group's aims. The satisfactions sacrificed, according to Freud, reappear fantasmatically in the unconscious or the id as not lost and as still enjoyed. Today, theorists claim instinctual renunciations are no longer essential, as we now possess accumulated wealth sufficient to satisfy all wants. Instead of sacrifice, the economy of goods emphasizes satisfaction, and the collective aspect of society appears mainly in a policing that ensures the enjoyment of these goods in safety and security.

Capitalism discursively dominates the 'post-scarcity' condition as its self-proclaimed guarantor by progressively freeing us from the external and internal contradictions that motivated our history. If the current moment seems filled with tension and enflamed passions, the theory goes that, as democratic capitalism realizes the endpoint of a history by eliminating these contradictions, conflicts will eventually prove superficial. Thus the 'beltway' Hegelians (e.g., Francis Fukuyama) once argued that the triumph of capitalist accumulation is analogous to Hegel's Spirit, realized as the sum of all knowledge⁴ and that the free market was the final liberation of enjoyment for all. The image of a unified, harmonious world that thus stands at (and as) the final moment of the history of civilization requires that its cities reflect the end of

conflicts – or, the fulfillment, as it were, of the pleasure principle's *timeless* world of free enjoyment. Indeed, radical capitalism is quick to lay the old Freudian unconscious (with its death-drive) to rest, since it claims that the repressions that shaped it are no longer necessary in an economy of plenty and an unlimited freedom to enjoy it.

This extreme, purified model of capitalism has emerged only since the 1980s (after the fall of the Berlin Wall) and it is not what was first associated with the capitalism whose abuses evoked discourses of exploitation, impoverishment of workers, etc. and led to calls for revolution and reform. Indeed, at one moment capitalism moderated some of its most intractable problems and came to be linked with the 'democratization' and 'emancipation' embodied in many of the great cities of the mid 20th century, especially in North America. These classical capitalist cities showcased the 'salient gains of the industrial revolution' as both economic and social gains. Charles Abrams, chief planner for the City of New York, described them this way: 'The composite (if yet unblended) society in our cities [. . .] made it possible for people of all creeds, classes, types and social positions to emulate their betters, to mingle in the same coffee houses, theatres and movies, if they could afford them, in the same libraries, forums, parks and schools, if they wanted to; to marry each other, if they met and cared . . .' (Abrams 1949: 38).

In the city of my birth (Chicago) these ideals were officially integral to its built environment. As if they illustrated in advance Marguerite Duras' phrase 'the vast democratic night of the movie theatre' (from *The Seawall*) Chicago movie palaces were, for example, designed so that 'the hard-working people of Chicago' could enjoy what 'only the crowned heads of Europe once had.' Thus said George Rapp of Rapp and Rapp, the firm engaged by Chicago's Balaban brothers to build theaters mandated to be 'unequaled when it came to presentation of stunning opulence without vulgarity,' and wrote that he thrilled to 'watch the bright light in the eyes of the tired shopgirl as she walks among furnishings that once delighted the hearts of queens . . .' (Lowe 1975: 203).

Chicago's city charter decreed the beachfront be maintained exclusively for the people's enjoyment and education; merchant princes like Aaron Montgomery Ward protected Chicago's lakefront from real estate developers by defending the city charter before the US Supreme Court several times. I loved this democratic city passionately because it quite simply opened the whole world to my unfettered curiosity. The city was *the space* where I could think freely, and 'thinking freely' for me seemed *the* most fundamental human right. I had no sense that (à la Kojève's

Hegel) knowledge and cultural wealth had reached a final point of accumulation. The city's horizons seemed infinite.

Not everyone, of course, felt the same way. The salient social 'gains made by the industrial revolution' Abrams celebrates were already long contested. In 1932 the American-born poet T. S. Eliot delivered a lecture at the University of Virginia excoriating all the traits I thought were urbanity's treasured virtues. Eliot says: '[A] population should be homogeneous; where two or more cultures exist in the same place they are likely either to be fiercely self-conscious or both to become adulterate. What is still more important is unity of religious background; and reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable' (Eliot 1932: 2003).

Rediscovered only in 2003, Eliot's lecture was never published due to his repugnant prejudices. Yet it must be said that the Eliotian ideal for a dwelling place was by no means confined to prewar proto-fascist sentiment. After all, Abrams' mournful outcry to the conference on Human Relations in Chicago that 'all of these [gains] are to give way to a uniform occupancy' was his anguished response to a decision taken the previous year (1948) by the International Housing Conference in Zurich. That conference concluded cities were no longer viable for human dwelling, largely because of their dangerous admixture of peoples. The solution was to start shifting the population to small 'garden cities' near to the older cities, which would remain as financial and visitation centers but where no one should *have to* live. Lewis Mumford's anti-urban ideal of a 'garden city' was adapted to meet new postwar demands for racial, religious, class and economic harmony – by separating these garden mini-cities from The City while segregating them from each other by greenbelts (Zurich 1948). Such garden cities were immediately built in Sweden, and they jumpstarted the rise of suburbia everywhere. They were to be uniform in character, with their populations as homogeneous as possible in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, and socio-economic class. Thus, a suburban sameness spread rapidly across America.

There have been many explanations for the rapid spread of suburbia and the withdrawal of libidinal investment in the North American city (e.g., movement of industry to the third world; post-war housing shortages; the fact that cities as visible centers of accumulated cultural and economic wealth are the only worthwhile or viable targets for expensive nuclear bombs; MacCannell 1982). Whatever the case, we are at the point where urban theorist Saskia Sassen can state that cities are now viable only as major nodes of international finance capital, or if they are made suitable for suburban tourists: 'Now that most people

in the highly developed countries reside in suburbs and small towns, the large city has assumed the status of *exotica*. Modern tourism is no longer centered on the historic monument, concert hall, or museum, but on . . . some version of the urban scene fit for tourism' (Judd and Fainstein 1999: 143). With the city reduced to a superficial imaginary version of its past 'fit for tourism,' and with its suburbs the emblem of all available satisfactions, we see the Eliotian hostility toward the city as no simple accident of historical and technological evolution. Instead, resistance to urbanity indicates an unconscious at work in capitalism's peculiar love-hate relation to the cities it gave rise to and then abandoned and destroyed – and in its embrace of suburban Nirvanas embodying, in their very graveyard-like layout and design, the fulfillment of the pleasure principle. Both reveal a death-driven character in capitalism that remains unanalyzed.

Of course, viewing the city and the suburb of late capitalism from a psychoanalytic standpoint is an unusual methodological move, since the standard psychoanalytic approach to the unconscious looks to a traumatic *past* and considers the present (and future) wholly determined by that past. Nevertheless, we can look directly for an unconscious at work, here and now – an unconscious legible on the visible surface like Poe's Purloined Letter – by engaging in a *symptomatic* reading of capitalism's chief built environments (the city and the suburb) and the architectural forms dominating these spaces today.

The capitalist unconscious is readable not only in the destroyed cities, but in the 'dead zones' of its landscapes of bland suburban sameness: places of consumption not intended as 'symbolic show' like the Chicago theatres but designed to protect the goods they enclose within from being seen from without – so they can be freely enjoyed. The predominance of sequestered places (e.g., gated communities) in today's architectural expressions indexes the triumph of a sadistic over a symbolic ethic. In what follows I will offer a symptomatic reading of the structures encoding the identification of free market capitalism and free enjoyment as these are both shaped by a Sadean ethics of enjoyment.

The Work of the Unconscious in the Built Environments of Late Capitalism

The free market officially embodies the highest ideals of rationality and fairness that sociologist Max Weber attributed exclusively to the economic form known as capitalism (Weber 1905: 1958). Alongside his discussion of its sterling attributes (free, open, rational), Weber noted that capitalism was also characterized by an *ethical* demand for worldly asceticism

(the legacy of its Protestant origins), with a special antipathy toward the *display* of worldly wealth.⁵ Now compare Weber's characterization of the *ethos* of capitalism with Marx's, who, in the first line of *Das Kapital* makes the *display of wealth* the very foundation of capitalism's power as a power to impress: the wealth of the capitalist nations presents itself, he says, as an 'an immense accumulation of commodities' (Marx 1965: 31). Thus of this same capitalism, Karl Marx says the exact reverse of Weber. Which one correctly identified capitalism's elementary environment? Spatial evidence can be marshaled for either. On the side of Marx, Walter Benjamin beautifully detailed how the *vitrines* of great shopping arcades were the logical spatial outcome of commodity capitalism: the goods displayed through the openings in the walls of imposing buildings had 'just the right' amount of peek-a-boo allure to incite 'just the right' amount of impossible longing for them. One frequented the city's *grands magasins* and fancy department stores not really to buy, but to look, and be looked at: this very act of window-shopping outfitted you and fitted you into the social norms regulating satisfaction. They kept your desire alive, unsatisfied, at a *distance* and at a *price*. The substitute cultural satisfaction of being seen in this world of goods required the sacrifice of immediacy and/or of one's wealth.

On the other side, however, consider today's 'big box stores.' Here Weber's theory is fully confirmed. These stores are the exact reverse of Benjamin's graceful arcades. In them, an unimaginably immense accumulation of commodities is certainly piled up, à la Marx, but there are no *displays*. In fact, 'big box' stores sequester their piles of goods inside massive, windowless structures – there are no *vitrines* – built of prison-like stone and/or painted in loud colors that set them off as unmistakably separate from any natural or social landscape around them.

Big boxes eschew external display and are all but impenetrable to the glance of the passerby (usually they can only be reached by automobile). They are, however, clearly visible from above, as their physical footprint is gigantic: they create an enormous flat spot on the visual map, seemingly intent on covering over as much of the earth as possible. Although you cannot see into them from without, inside everything is put immediately at your disposal. Goods are not artfully displayed, but arranged in massive stacks (sometimes at danger to life and limb), oriented for easy access, not for eye appeal. You rarely have to deal with a clerk or employee; you just grab the stuff, pay one 'low, low price' and go. There are even E-Z self-checkout counters. Effortless *jouissance*. Immediate satisfaction – and, at practically no cost: remember those low, low prices.

Sticking out like neurotic symptoms on the landscape, these 'big box' structures act for all the world as if they were the final solution to the problem of regulating access to enjoyment: it's all contained there and it spills over nowhere else. What this really means, however, is that consumer capitalism and 'free markets' now function optimally under spatial conditions that are frankly carceral, confirming our total encirclement by the capitalist economy. And as such, it is a prison-house of enjoyment precisely modeled on the id-satisfactions once found only in the Freudian unconscious.

Our ads repeatedly imply that consuming its goods transports us to the purity of pre-history (before civilization), making us into infants perhaps still in the womb. Is the gratification to be had there any more real than those alluring, though inaccessible (with too high a price behind glass) goods just out of most people's reach in Benjamin's arcades? Not really. For, once inside the big box, you are hardly free: you are not at liberty to 'just look around.' The big box not only overwhelms your powers of discriminating perception, it often openly *coerces* you into looking at the totality of its contents and forces you to see this mass of goods in only one way. At the Ikea store in Emeryville, California (near 'free speech' Berkeley) you are not allowed to roam the store at will; you must follow an itinerary that dictates your passing in front of all the commodities there. Moreover, because the store is inaccessible by foot, the roads force you away from seeing what is *behind* it, to wit, the remains of the industrial sites of capitalist production now displaced by these palaces for the orgiastic consumption of goods produced elsewhere.

In fancy magazine ads, of course, the consumer is a discerning, financially able buyer on a leisurely quest for the 'best' goods. In reality consumption is now a humiliating grab for the absolute cheapest things, which usually requires buying them in gigantic bulk. There is a psychical *Verneinung* at work in the imperative to immerse oneself in inundating, endless oceanic waves of goods. If only as a new way to instill Superegoic social guilt: when the shoppers finally do emerge from a Wal-Mart they wear the vaguely furtive look of looters hustling back to their big box vans or SUVs, embarrassingly staggering under their clumsy, haphazard booty (giant rolls of toilet tissue; 25 kilos of onions). The gluttony of free enjoyment claimed for these big blind boxes exists only so long as you remain *inside*.

The subjective ethic spatially realized in these prison-like enclosures has the unmistakable tint of the sadistic: you can enjoy *only within*, in these over-lighted spaces where it seems no limits are placed around a *jouissance* that (by comparison) is completely absent outside them. Entering them, you consent to be walled off

from the community or city outside. Thus the image of capitalism's riot of choices and its open access to all the world's goods appears within closed buildings that belie it: viewless agglomerations of stone and brick, prison-like structures. What, after all, are these massive buildings *really* trying to *hold back*? And what are they really trying to *hide* if not the fact that, as structural points of *over-accumulation* they are blocking other possible libidinal investments elsewhere? They jam and dam up a multiform desire that might otherwise be making other spaces, other pathways for flows to be interrupted according to other subjective rhythms, other ways of *dreaming* the impossible difference between consuming and being consumed. They are there to prevent desire from circulating freely in the streets, flowing from passerby to passerby.

For its terminal spatial expression Late Capitalism ironically finds itself embracing Sade's definition of satisfaction (in Sade, one enjoys fully only in hidden bedrooms or behind the prison walls of Silling and the Bastille or, more recently, Abu Ghraib). Yet, even at the level of layout and structure the big box reveals a fatal glitch, *the* hitch in the simple sadistic programming of 'in-and-out' consumption and satisfaction. Because it cannot really constitute the 'whole' world as timeless and one-sided, contemporary capitalism must insist on being the *only* game in town, visually erasing the reality outside its encircling embrace. Take, for instance, the text of the advertisement of Hyatt hotel with the heading: 'When There's Nowhere You Have To Be, Where Do You Go?'; 'Every now and then it happens: A little extra time on your hands, and the whole city at your feet. How wonderfully overwhelming. Not to fear, however – Hyatt will help you enjoy each precious minute . . . It's quite possible you will find the entertainment you desire right in the hotel . . . Granted, your time on a business trip is rarely your own. But in the event you do find yourself with a free moment or two, we'll help you make the most of it.' (*The New Yorker*, inside back cover 28 December 1998/ 9 January 1999). A 'luxurious' moment of freedom is prescribed to the figure in this ad; yet a cynically manipulated perspective ruins its promise. While being told that the 'city is at your feet,' a black woman, in her bathrobe, exposed to the view outside, finds the cityscape set before her actually looming *over* her, completely obstructing her view of the horizon. Whatever might lie beyond, beside or within her purview otherwise – nature, culture, daily life – is stricken from sight. This is supposed to comfort her: 'Not to fear.' Yet, how could she not fear what might lie behind the darkly tinted skyscraper windows, which seem to be keeping this woman of color under surveillance? The 'City' before her is uninviting and characterless, with every distinctive feature eliminated – like the

faces of adolescent girls and their botoxed Moms today. Yet, almost directly proportional to the eradication of distinguishing markings in the scene set before her, a rather large dark stain, betraying the hotel's faulty construction, is developing and starting to spread inexorably from the balcony's corner – in her direction. The *verbal* message reads: 'You're a free woman!' and 'There's nowhere you have to be.' But the *visual* message is the grim commandment: 'You *have* to be in this place which is *nowhere*; you'll never *get anywhere*' – and you can't *get away*. Could there be a bleaker image of incarceration accompanied by a more abject rhetoric of 'freedom' and 'enjoyment'?

As for the suburbs, they are pictured in mass media as orgies of sexual license. Adultery and incest flourish already in Grace Metallious' 1956 suburban epic, *Peyton Place*, the fourth all-time best-seller. A spate of recent television shows features suburbia as late capitalism's most sought-after space, where free enjoyment thrives within restricted, gated communities. In the infamous 'Desperate Housewives,' murder, child abuse, incest and other trespasses highlight each episode. The storylines of BBC's 'Murder in Suburbia' feature wild sexual combinations (in one episode a mother, her daughter and her business partner all share the same lover). 'Weeds,' another acclaimed show, portrays a widowed suburban housewife who sells marijuana in her upscale neighborhood to make ends meet. Her pot-addicted teenage neighbor boy becomes the plaything of a cynical millionaire for money and pool privileges. The widow's son and his girlfriend keep their promise not to sleep together under his mother's roof by placing their bed under a hole. This 'soccer Mom' must come to the ghetto to purchase her marijuana from a black family – and to keep her suburb free of such minority riff-raff. At one point, menaced by a Latino drug dealer who complains she is cutting into his territory, she goes to the city, confronting him there in an anonymous alley. They face off, then they suddenly shift to having spontaneous, wild sex on the hood of her car – in broad daylight. Then, the widow threatens to shoot off his genitals if he ever comes near her house again. Defending her goods, as Lacan would say, seems to be the same as forbidding (*défense de*) enjoying them.

Consumer capitalism's purveyance of full 'satisfaction' is only, then, a *virtual* 'realization' of the Freudian unconscious's wishes. But can we still call it an *unconscious* if everything is so open to perception and available for enjoyment? Not unless we can discover what is *not* being disclosed, *not* completely discharged, *not* realized in these elaborate fantasy scenes of an enjoyment within the limits of capitalism alone. Let us, then, return to Freud and Lacan, who both note that the excessive damming up of accumulated *libido* is the hallmark of the *impotent* subject, the

one unable to partake of 'good old fashioned enjoyment.' Lacan adds that this impotence of the subject is the very psychical foundation of capitalism (Freud's example is the bed-wetter Dora, a sexually immature child incapable of joining in adult pleasures of the flesh and identifying with her syphilitic, impotent father).

The Spatial Unconscious

Psychoanalysis is generally considered a retrospective operation: the rigorous search for an original trauma (the loss of an original object of enjoyment) that repeats itself in disguise over the course of a failed life. The singular, primal event, the 'first' moment when the original object of satisfaction was lost is then masked by fantasy – a fantasy that structures the reappearance of the object in everyday disguises: in our wishes and desires, our daydreams, our hallucinations, and our delusions. Freud found the space of fantasy the foundation of all mentation (Freud 1897; 1903: 283). For Freud, though, locating the lost object in the fantasy is not the only story. Indeed, a systematic review of Freud's 'space' from first to last (Freud 1887 – 1902 to 1937) demonstrates his concern for the subject's *placement* in unconscious fantasy. This concern models the following section on the spatial unconscious of modern capitalism.

Unconscious fantasy *locates* the object of satisfaction as somehow *still in the picture* – still there, *not yet lost*. The subject projects onto the fantasy screen an unconscious amendment of reality so as to lay claim to its lost *jouissance*. Fantasy stages a scenario restoring the object to its rightful place as enjoyed by the subject, if only in disguise. It governs 'reality' by guiding the way the subject historically weaves (and symptomatically distorts) the denials of the loss into the fabric of its 'reality.' Fantasy thus *lies* – in both senses: it creates a scene in which the object's 'original' loss is presented as *untrue*, and it lies as a landscape supporting desires and dreams.

Once the spatial arrangements of the unconscious fantasy dislodge *temporality* as the primary orientation of analysis we can explore the consequences directly. The latter, in turn, must alter the general image of psychoanalysis as a purely temporal operation, and makes Freud's sense of space as revolutionary as his comprehension of subjective time.⁶ Indeed, Lacan devoted an entire seminar to the fantasy and its logic to make sense of fantasy's space, which screens off trauma, and actively denies the division between the subject and its 'lost' object. Slavoj Žižek (1997) vividly paints fantasy's basic mechanisms: 'Fantasy is the very screen that separates desire from drive: it tells the story which allows the subject to (mis)perceive the void around which drive circulates as the primordial loss constitutive of desire.'

In other words, fantasy provides a rationale for the inherent deadlock of desire; it constructs the scene in which the *jouissance* we are deprived of is concentrated in the Other who stole it from us' (1997:33-34).

Analysis must therefore not so much seek to seize the 'first traumatic moment' as to comprehend the 'whole picture' that includes that 'other stage' (*Andere Schauplatz*) fantasmatically elaborated to conceal the subject's split from its object of enjoyment. In his *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis* (1918: 'The Wolfman') Freud takes Sergei, his patient, back to his earliest childhood memories in search of the traumatic event that has set up his psychical difficulties in sex, love, bodily functions, etc. Although the two uncover several possibilities (seduction by Sergei's sister made him ambivalent about his sexual orientation; abuse at the hands of an uncle likewise, etc.), the analysis encounters a complete blockage. They can go no further. At this point, Sergei tells Freud of an extraordinary dream he has had. He is in bed, when the windows of the room fly suddenly open, and he sees in the tree outside in the moonlight six or seven white wolves, tails erected, staring at him fixedly. The dream is so vivid Sergei even makes Freud a precise drawing. The pair go through many children's books and old tales to find the original – without luck. Finally Freud decides to attack the dream itself head-on. He considers it might be a fantasmatic projection hiding the primal scene of loss from Sergei. Freud makes no effort to pierce the fantasy screen to see the original scene. Instead, he makes a maneuver that reorients the dream-scene and places its subject, Sergei, into it in an entirely different position. Subjecting the Wolfman's dreamscape to a remarkable series of spatial reversals, Freud first rotates the dreamer's position inside the dream, so that the window that flies open is not something looked *at* but something looked *through*: the aperture is the infant's own eyelids, startled suddenly apart. The infant is now the one who sees, not the scopical object of staring wolves. And what he sees is now resolved from 'several wolves' into only one darkly hirsute figure: Sergei's own lupine father, sexually mounting the child's mother the way a furry, four-legged animal enters his female (Freud uses the Latin phrase for 'from behind': '*a tergo*'). The scene's trauma is the alternate appearance and disappearance of his father's penis (construed by the infant as its loss). The alternation makes this into the primal scene, Freud notes, of the Wolfman's traumatic encounter with castration (Freud 1918; 1955: 45). This castration fantasy has motivated the patient's recurrent failures in life and love.

In dramatically shifting the spatial coordinates that position the subject, Freud dislodges the subject who has cozily embedded

himself in the fantasy scene so as to maximize his own potential for enjoyment, and to inflate the comforting presence of phallic forms – the wolves' seven tails. With Freud's half-turn, the dreamscape re-articulates the Wolfman to his fantasy constructs so as to reveal the truth (hidden in castration anxiety). Freud's alternative construction supplants the Wolfman's fantasy edifice and frees his drive energy to take different paths. Lacan (1973) eventually offered Freud's radical reversal of space a proper name: *anamorphosis*, the half-turn that reveals the 'other scene.' Freud moves the Wolfman off his 'satisfied' position in Sergei's fantasy scene (arranged to screen off any hint of castration) with an anamorphic shift in subjective perspective. A wholly different prospect materializes for his patient, granting a fresh perspective on the Wolfman's truth.

The adamancy and immovability of the Wolfman's unconscious fantasy had resisted all changes wrought by time and experience – even his psychoanalytic experience. Sergei's fantasy was not a 'memory' but a spatial *construction*. Freud never attempted to access his lost object, or pierce the veil of fantasy concealing it. Instead the success of the analysis required what Freud, late in his career, calls '*constructions*' (Freud 1937 and 1918). 'Construction' is a *spatial* metaphor for a singularly new treatment where moment and place, time and space are not easily separable, designed to reveal the negative energy motivating and stifling the patient: his death-drive. Death-drive: in the middle of the coursing stream of subjective time stands some Thing, stony and unbudging, with dimensionality, with weight, yet empty and insubstantial, that amplifies natural nervous energy, converting it into death-drive. Lacan's analogy is that of a psychical turbine in the river of subjective time: 'a hydroelectric plant set mid-stream in a great river [that] by cumulating and augmenting natural forces [energy] . . . contributes to the constructed, fantasmatic character of *Wirklichkeit* [reality]' (Lacan 1994: 32-33). Death drive feels like forward momentum. Yet it restricts the subject to a compulsive circling around an empty point. *Fantasy* hides the source of the unconscious (death-drive) by framing it as reparation for a primordial injury (the loss of *jouissance*). Once the fundamental fantasy is deconstructed (or once a Freudian 'construction' permits the death-drive motivating the fantasy to appear in all its stark horror), the Wolfman's life starts moving again.

Not everyone, of course, finds the analysis of fantasy's spatial claims a way to refurbish psychical history and provide new departures. Slavoj Žižek (1997) suggests, on the contrary that the 'end' of analysis, the realization of death-drive, is the merciful end of painful (human) time, with its longings and

illusions. For Žižek, traversing the fantasy confronts us with a death-drive that suspends desire's fantasy supports in favor of an eternal *jouissance*: the horror/fulfillment of cycling endlessly around an empty hole. The end of analysis destroys the subjective illusions that dissimulate the finite character of death-drive, its 'radical closure' (1997: 31). Žižek strongly opposes '... the opening involved in the finitude/temporality of the desiring subject,' (1997:31) as a futile effort to 'maintain [a] false opening' (1997: 33). In place of desire and its hopes for the future ('Messianism' he calls it), Žižek finds that accepting the closure of death-drive will yield a different kind of satisfaction: 'once we move beyond desire – that is to say, beyond the fantasy which sustains desire – we enter the strange domain of *drive*: the domain of the closed circular palpitation which finds satisfaction in endlessly repeating the same failed gesture' (1997: 30). Restriction to the eternal cycle of drive delivers an unexpected dividend of *joy*: 'In "traversing the fantas," we find *jouissance* in the vicious cycle of circulating around the void of the (missing) object, renouncing the myth that *jouissance* has to be amassed somewhere else.' (1997:33-34) A joy so profound might merit being called 'joy-in-death-drive': drive satisfaction (*jouissance*) re-found at and as the very *last moment*. To reach the zero point of time where drive energizes fantasy makes eternity the only alternative perspective on the human time motivated by the original loss. Like Pascal – and like Sade – Žižek thus sees redemption in resignation to death-drive's 'unbearable closure of being' (1997: 30): there is pleasure to be taken in its very restraints. But the result is still somber, for what is Žižek's 'unbearable closure of being,' looked at *spatially*? It is no more nor less than that final empty space awaiting us all at the end of our time: the *grave*.

The fact that a leading philosopher, cultural critic and long-time student of psychoanalysis takes comfort in so banal a final solution to human time should give us all pause. For he participates in the same desire for an end to history as the neo-Hegelian promoters of the contemporary capitalist ethos also aspire to. The spatial correlate is the same: a *container* enclosing a *jouissance* found nowhere else. What remains unanalyzed in Žižek's discourse, as in the discourse of capitalism and its apologists, is also what models the very dialectics of urban and suburban, conscious and unconscious I have been describing as a spatial unconscious: resistance to the new, demands for closure and enclosure, a treasury of *jouissance*, an end to human time. All these necessarily restrict the architectural imagination to creating variations on 'the box' – or the grave. Hence the usual psychoanalytic attitude toward architectural efforts: 'Don't you think architects love their mothers too much?' a psychoanalyst

asks – i.e., aren't all built spaces containers representing a return to the womb that foreshadows the tomb? Isn't it self-evident that we all desire a final rest after enjoying our worldly goods, and isn't being cradled (even by death-drive) all the way to the grave an alluring notion?

Is architecture really bound by its role as surrogate for the lost maternal embrace (and the closure of death)? Does it need to be enclosed in the structure of death-drive as Žižek describes it? This is true as long as the spatial unconscious escapes analytic scrutiny. Why, we should ask, are so few passionate objections ever raised to the development of vast acreages of suburban housing projects, whereas virulent invective is used to protest against unique architectural projects. The feeblest, most affectless opposition is voiced to 'developments' that will blanket hundreds or thousands of acres with uniform, unimaginative suburban housing.⁷ The profits made trump all objections, of course, but that is not the only reason. These 'little boxes' do not disturb our fantasmatic reality: our ready-to-wear suburban 'lifestyles' that defend our goods and permit their enjoyment. Innovative architecture, on the contrary, disturbs fantasmatic 'comfort zones,' touching the layer of existence where our fantasized place is put in danger or in doubt. The easy acceptance of suburban tract housing can be compared with the uproar caused by Rem Koolhaas' proposed Prada store for San Francisco, wrapped in a stainless steel exterior pierced at regular intervals by uniform holes. It was immediately vilified as a giant 'cheese grater.' The copper clad de Young Museum in Golden Gate Park by Herzog and de Meuron, which features a tower that people instantly likened to that of a prison, has caused endless negative commentary. New architectural objects are almost inevitably likened to familiar, even domestic objects (e.g., a cheese grater) to blunt their power to disturb our fundamental fantasy of our 'place' in a world of plenty.

This implies that architectural intervention can and often does parallel the work of Freud's analytic 'constructions.' The spatial reorientation of the fundamental fantasy Freud effected in the Wolfman offers an entirely different resolution to the traversal of fantasy from Žižek's posture of resignation, and presents a different line of flight from the still point of death-drive. But even 'starchitects' cannot always offer the crucial alternative perspective, as their prominence is too often used to hide the declining standards for housing experienced by ever-greater segments of the world's population (Mike Davis's 'global slums'). And 'postmodern' architecture deploys the same (neo-Hegelian) theory of temporality as Žižek and Fukuyama – the invocation of an 'end to history' and the eternal 'cycling' of old forms that concretize the eternal return of the same.

The stakes for the analysis of the spatial unconscious are the same stakes for radical architecture: to re-start subjective *time* by 'treating' it with space – by providing a different prospect for a psychical gaze blinded to the critical importance of what 'is not' (yet) by its comfortable fantasies of what 'is.' Once space, not time, is psychoanalytically reversed, an 'architectural option' for traversing the fantasy emerges, and becomes the instrument of choice for analyzing the built environments of the capitalist unconscious. The architectural option must take the emptiness at the beginning/end of time for what it is: the spacing or the empty interval needed for something new to begin, like the interval between the first signifier and the second that produces meaning.

If death-drive has all the trappings of a temporal movement, but it is in actuality stuck cycling around an immobile point, creative resistance to it engages what Freud once said of death-drive: that it is 'the spur to mental labor.' A 'radical' architecture, set toward new departures (i.e., not striving to return to the uterine/mortal enclosure) can move us around *inside* fantasy space and turn its subject *sideways* to look in an unexpected direction – *transversely* – through the unconscious fantasy frame. In this labor psychoanalysis and architecture can learn much from the radical practice of Emilio Ambasz. To look at Ambasz' work is to wonder, 'What if we refuse to dwell on the delights of the fantasy frame and simply turn aside from the picture it presents? What if we look neither backwards nor forwards to the inexorable path produced by death-drive, and look through the frame anamorphically instead?' What new life might materialize before our repositioned gaze? Ambasz' enigmatic architecture reverses the retrospective temporal orientation – and thereby the directives – usually ascribed to psychoanalysis and that psychoanalysis usually ascribes to architecture. Ambasz describes his architecture as the 'pursuit of alternative futures' (Sorkin 2004:108).

The Architectural Option: New Departures

What Ambasz engages is not entirely obvious. Some writers suspect Ambasz of an undue 'maternal attachment' because he sets his architectural objects into their landscapes in such a way that they cannot really be detached from them: they could not be constructed just anywhere. But this view ignores that he subjects his buildings' landscapes to the same powerful stresses, the same distinctive viewpoints that he brings to bear on his constructions – and this aspect of his architecture runs completely counter to the idea that Ambasz exalts ground over construct. Instead, his buildings, balanced in and not merely on the earth, are suffused with a striking potential energy that could break in any of several

ways, some terrifying, some radiant. Ambasz' creations do have a distinctly un-contemporary, almost atemporal feel; some argue his work has a sense of mythic time before time, while others honestly describe their reactions as the opposite: Ambasz seems to be looking towards an enigmatic future in which our entire relation to time, space and nature will be fully disclosed.

Interpreters agree that time seems somehow implicated in his architecture, but also that it is secondary to, or even dependent on, his innovations with space. Lauren Ledofsky describes Ambasz as 'bring[ing] forth the earth' when he half-buries more or less 'canonical' buildings (such as a Mediterranean villa), and thus enables what Ledofsky calls the 'emergence of the earth over and against architecture.' (Sorkin 2004: 44) Indeed, the motto of Ambasz' architectural enterprise is 'Green over Gray' or in other words, landscape over architecture (Ambasz 2004). In his structures, the earth covered over by the building is re-incorporated into it in innovative ways.

Ambasz' habitants of the earth appear to be comparatively few and they seem not to have marked (or ruined) nature in any highly visible or indelible way. Yet they are not dwarfed by the 'nature' they dwell in. Ambasz' buildings are unmistakably human-oriented creations that, although often half-buried, with unclear exits and entrances and with no obvious ways of escape or lines of flight from them, are nonetheless islands of a peace and a harmony that never appear in that vertical, temporal perspective (eternal time) in which man is under earth and both are under God. His is not the unruffled calm of a perfect consonance with nature, a good 'death.' Fellow architects are quick to comprehend that Ambasz' earth is as far from 'natural' as possible. Ettore Sottsass, for instance, remarks how 'Ambasz's earth is not at all the picturesque botanical compendium of the pastoral' (in Ledofsky 2004: 42); while Robert Wines (Sorkin 2004: 89) terms Ambasz's a 'Daliesque Landscape.' The seemingly obvious idea of green-over-gray does not really describe how Ambasz' architecture actually relates to the earth. In one project, for example, he attempted to build a lake in a park that tilted at a 45° angle.

Indeed, Ambasz's architectural objects are not laid in the earth (swallowed by the grave) but they are not ignorant of this possible 'end' to their history (the way a suburban housing development denies its orientation to death while inadvertently revealing it through its design). Rather, he moves space off of the temporal oppositions we try to reduce it to (vertical, synchronic, eternal time; flowing diachronic time) that hold space within a familiar, fantasy framing. In his wonderful house Casa De Retiro Espiritual in Cordoba, Ambasz disorients space anamorphically, as if a wall that should surround is swiveled aside, and the stairs

that should lead to an interior look as if they go nowhere. The house makes a departure, disclosing a direction for time and experience that only a twist in space can really convey. Instead of unearthing the natural or archaic legacy of buried horrors, Ambasz' architectural objects materialize a space that confounds our fantasies of nature and history and produces *something else*. For Lacan, this satisfies the most elementary form of *desire*: 'the desire for something else' (1994: 303). Of his own work, Ambasz has this to say: 'Sometimes I fancy myself to be the last man of the present culture, building a house for the first man of a culture that has not yet arrived' (Sorkin 2004: 86).

Conclusion

At its most imaginative, architecture may serve as one of the finer metaphors for the significance of Freud's achievement: both make a space where we can see our 'world' *otherwise*. However triumphantly our capitalist world lays claim to full enjoyment, it remains shaped by unconscious fantasy. Radical architecture and the analysis of the spatial unconscious can now be seen as powerful guides to undoing the grip death-drive has on it, and to make 'new' *scenes* for human dreaming.

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Notes

- 1 This essay is the reworked version of a paper presented at the conference 'Psychoanalysis, Urban Theory and the City of Late-capitalism' held at the Jan Van Eyck Academie in Maastricht on 18-20 November 2005.
- 2 Jacques Lacan in 1969 spoke of an *aléthosphère* girdling the world, filled with avatars of *jouissance* called *lathouses* (gadgets) (1992).
- 3 Lacan (1992: 94): 'Ever since there have been economists nobody, up till now, has – not even for an instant . . . – made this remark that wealth is the property of the wealthy. Just like psychoanalysis which . . . is done by psychoanalysts, . . . why not, concerning wealth, begin with the wealthy?'
- 4 Lacan links the discourse of the university, dominated by 'accumulated knowledge' with the discourse of capitalism (1992). See Juliet Flower MacCannell (2006).

- 5 John D. Rockefeller brought home-made lunches to his office in brown paper bags, and permitted himself to indulge in only one luxury expenditure: the ten cents he paid to go ice skating in the plaza in front of his own Rockefeller Center – the ice-skating rink having been built with his own money (Weber 1958: 157).
- 6 Lacan filled in the apparent void of Freudian spatial inspiration through elaborate attention to projective geometry, Moebius strips, Klein bottles, knots, mathematical topology, Baroque architecture and *trompe l'oeil*, the city spaces in 'Little Hans,' and above all, *anamorphosis*. Freud says all mentation begins with the construction of fantasmatic space (1897-1903: 283).
- 7 See Malvina Reynolds, 'Little Boxes,' a folk song from the 1960s that complained about suburban houses as 'little boxes . . . all made out of ticky-tacky, and they all look just the same' – the theme song of 'Weeds.'